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No. Dublin - Whig Club 1509/93(5)

PETITION

OF THE

W H I G C L U B

TO THE

K I N G;

AS TRANSMITTED TO BE PRESENTED

BY THE

EARL OF MOIRA AND MR. FOX.

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-D U B L I N:-

1798.

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PRICE 1s. 1d.



# W H I G C L U B.

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*At a Meeting of the Whig Club, on Thursday  
the 5th April, 1798.*

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IT appeared to this Society, instituted for the purpose of supporting the RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE, that the character and conduct of the people of Ireland have been much misrepresented in some recent publications, which assert, *that Coercion must be resorted to, all attempts at Conciliation having repeatedly failed.*

IN consequence of which, they determined to frame a Petition to his Majesty, in order to do away, by a fair and ample statement of the measures pursued for many years by his Ministers, the evil consequences which must follow from the effect of those misrepresentations, on his Majesty's mind, and stating those measures, which in their humble apprehension, might still save this distracted country.

That the Committee do report on Saturday the 14th inst.





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# W H I G C L U B.

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THE

RIGHT HONORABLE HENRY GRATTAN

IN THE CHAIR.

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**R**ESOLVED, that the following declaration and petition be presented to his Majesty, containing, as we humbly conceive, the principal grounds of the applications, lately made by divers of his Irish subjects, for redress, and also a vindication of his people, against the traduction of his ministers.

His Majesty's ministers have affected to give a history of his people,—we will lay before his Majesty a history of them,—they began very far back—we will begin farther.

At the time, when in 1768, the then ministry formed a new system for Ireland, and under colour of destroying aristocratic power, did attack and destroy by unlimited bribery and corruption, whatever parliamentary power, or provincial check had existed in this island, as has been since acknowledged by one of his Majesty's ministers, and can now not even be doubted; some time after that, they

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laid an embargo on the provision trade of this country, without the consent of parliament, for the sake of certain British contractors in the American war, and with which they continued to inflict this country for years, contrary to law, and destructive to commerce.

About the same time, they forced the Irish parliament to pass an Address in favor of the American war, and then to lend from her own defence, a portion of her army, to fight against the liberty of America, that is, to sacrifice her defence, in order to destroy her liberty.

About the same time, they introduced a clause in his Majesty's speech from the throne, declaring on the subject of American taxation, that the power of the British parliament extended over *all* his Majesty's dominions; to this speculative despotism, they added practical tyranny, and procured a British act of parliament, imposing a tea tax on Ireland, which passed in the year 1779, and which they transmitted to this country, that the tax under that act, should be collected.

Some time after that, they inflicted this country with a perpetual mutiny-bill, or a military despotism, wherein our army was rendered to its government, independent of the parliament of Ireland.

Some time after that, they tendered to this country certain propositions, wherein were contained a tribute, to be annually paid by Ireland to Great Britain; also a perpetual revenue-bill, to collect that tribute; and under pretence of making laws by reference, a substantial transfer of the regulation of our trade to the parliament of Great Britain; these propositions, so degrading, so dishonourable, one of Majesty's ministers has been lately desperate enough to display, as an instance of their affection.

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Some time after that, in 1789, they thought proper to revoke, substantially and effectually, whatever had been gained in Constitution, and in order to break down an opposition in parliament, did notoriously and avowedly, buy and bribe the members thereof, so effectually, as to destroy whatever check or restraint, the parliament of this country might administer to the power of the crown; or whatever benefit or protection the people of Ireland might expect from the independency of their legislature. On the same plan of unconstitutional and scandalous influence, did they sell the peerage, to procure seats in the commons for the dependency and the dishonour of both houses of parliament; and having from this conduct, aggravated, by a most unseemly and unbecoming intemperance of manner, and incontinence of language, lost the confidence of the country, and greatly agitated the same; they then proceeded to a system of coercion, to support their plans of corruption, and to dragoon the people, as they had bought the parliament.

They began that system by an act, which tended, in a qualified manner, to disarm his Majesty's subjects, under certain regulations, named a gun-powder-bill, and had principally in view, to put down the Irish Volunteers; and to check the discontent which grew from this measure, as well from their other measures, further measures of violence, and new causes of discontent were resorted to. A convention-bill, professing to declare the law which it altered and framed, to disguise the innovation which it made, was propounded with a view to prevent the existence of expression in the people, as the *half million* had been applied to prevent the existence of that expression in the parliament, so that by operation of money and law, the power of popular utterance should have no existence whatsoever. The object of the bill was, the suppression of the public voice, and the effect of the bill was, the creation of private conspiracy. Public volition, we

submit to his Majesty, must exist, and his minister who stops the national organ, causes the explosion, and makes the subject a conspirator against his government, because that minister's government, is a conspirator against the subject.

Had not that convention-bill passed, we are told there would have been a convention at Athlone; we are told so without the least authority whatsoever, but happy had it been for this country and government, if such a convention had taken place; for then there would have been, probably, a reform and a peace, and his Majesty's ministers would have been removed, and his government would have been secure. But there was no reform, and there was instead of a convention, a convention-bill; and in order to overpower the host of discontents, the offspring of this bill added to the other measures; in order to punish additional discontents, the effect of Lord Fitzwilliam's removal, and the public disappointment that followed; in order to support the Irish ministry that succeeded and returned with their old maxims of government, they thought proper to proceed against the people without any form or process whatsoever; and laying aside the incumbrance of statute, and the delay of law, they suffered their general and other magistrates, to form themselves into a species of revolutionary tribunal, where these men sat without law, tried without law, sentenced without law, and punished without law—not a few individuals, but hordes, tribes, and generations of country people, sent a-board a tender often, on this principle, that if tried before a court of law, they would probably be acquitted. His Majesty has heard the effect of this policy, in the mutiny of his fleet. It has been said, that the law was open, we submit to his Majesty, that it was far otherwise, for a bill of indemnity was passed, nearly in the style and manner of acclamation, without enquiry, the proposal of which was rejected with an outcry; which bill of indemnity,

nity, went to secure the offending magistrates, against the consequences of their outrages and illegalities; that is to say, in our humble conception, the poor were stricken out of the protection of the law, and the rich out of its penalties; and then another bill was passed, to give such lawless proceedings against his Majesty's subjects continuation; namely, a bill to enable the magistrates to perpetrate by law, those offences which they had before committed against it; a bill to legalize outrage, to barbarize law, and to give the law itself the cast and colour of outrage. By such a bill, the magistrates were enabled, without legal process, to send aboard a tender his Majesty's subjects, and the country was divided into two classes, or formed into two distinct nations, living under the same king, and inhabiting the same island; one consisting of the King's magistrates, and the other of the King's subjects; the former without restraint, and the latter without privilege.

The supporters of his Majesty's ministers have boasted of the effects of his bills, in establishing security; we lament that we cannot believe them; and we know very well how sanguine they have been on similar subjects, and how miserably they have deluded government and themselves. Will they assure his Majesty that this insurrection-bill prevented General Lake's proclamation; that it prevented the proclamation of the 17th of May, 1797; the proclamation of the 30th of March, 1798, or the General's orders of the 3d of April; or will they say it restored cordiality to the North, or prevented the extent of discontent to the South? These unfortunate laws they aggravated, by making the officers of the army justices of peace. In vain has the principle of the constitution required, that the military should act under the civil power; they transferred the civil power into the hands of the military; that is to say, they made the sword the magistrate, and of course, the sword the law; they destroyed the law, and they disorganized



ized the army ; and as they had destroyed the law, so did they disgrace the gospel. They made the clergy magistrates, to commit their flock, they converted the spiritual guide into a court constable, and the pastor of the flock into the leader of detachments, whose fold became the county gaol, and whose flock was his prisoners. By this scandalous use of the clergy, did they bring shame upon the church, that saw, we hope with concern, the armed divine renounce his evangelic calling, forego his apostolic character, and recommend himself to his Majesty's ministers, by his corrupt officiousness, to commit and imprison his own parishioners.

The perversion of the altar was accompanied, by a measure as fatal to liberty, as the other was to religion ; we mean, the total and entire suppression of the Liberty of the Press, by the army acting without magistrates, and by magistrates acting without law, as was the case of the press in Belfast, and a press in Dublin ; the former repeatedly attacked and finally destroyed, by military force ; and the latter put down and robbed by the order of government, against law ; we are to add, the suppression of a press at Cork, without any law or legal authority, and we are further to add, and with concern we say it, that now no free press will be permitted by administration, and that species of liberty is in his Majesty's kingdom of Ireland, totally and entirely effaced and obliterated by his ministers, save only, as far as the grossest exercise of licentiousness is encouraged by those ministers, in a court journal, paid at the expence of the people, supplied by some of the clerks of government, and directed against public principle and private virtue, in a strain of matchless vituperation and impudence.

The loss of personal liberty makes an ample portion of the mystery we relate, the measure of sending to goal the middling orders of people, against whom no visible charge  
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subjects ; being men of a rank which placed them above the meanness of want, and the meanness of riches ; and who by a strong constitutional understanding, and by a proud unbending unappalled spirit, had become hateful to a faction who hated the people. What effect we beg to submit to his Majesty, must such a measure have had on the minds of their fellow-citizens, who saw no safety for themselves, in a system where oppression took its walk among the middle and orderly rank, and where attachment to the people had become treason to the State ?

The effect this had on their mind is manifest, from a general resolution to bring home the crops of the persons so imprisoned ; and the dispersal of the neighbours so assembled, added considerably to that effect, still further encreased when they saw most of those sufferers either triumphantly acquitted ; or without prosecution enlarged after having been seized in their town, torn from their families, led as traitors through their counties, and for above a year confined in a goal and now carrying about in their own person the living evidence of a convicted government and an expired constitution.

To this oppression we submit to his Majesty the dispersal or prevention of county meetings, called for the purpose of addressing the king to remove his ministers.

The people of Ireland had been greatly misrepresented—they were neither slaves nor rebels ; the powers of understanding, or of mental energy, had in some degree passed from the highest to the middle order, who had rescued their liberty from the Parliament of Great Britain, and would not be cheated out of it by the Parliament of Ireland. They were not to be put down by venality, nor to be divided by religion ; nor to be barked out of their freedom by the senseless cry and forked tongue of his ministers. was made—except that they were beloved by their fellow-

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That minister who determines to enslave the people, must renounce their project or wade through their blood. The people accordingly in the spring of 1797, resorted to the constitutional ways of petition, and applied to the different Sheriffs to summon their counties, and on refusal by the Sheriff, (a dangerous courtly artifice to stop the prayers of the people from reaching the throne) they summoned themselves. What was the consequence? The petitioners were (we beg to represent to his Majesty) confounded with rebels, and the enemies of his ministers were represented as the enemies of his person—the petitioners were answered by fresh troops from England and Scotland; in some instances the meetings were dispersed by the army, and in others were deterred by the threat of military force; and thus did his Majesty's ministers ratify the justice of the petitions against them, by adding this great and impeachable offence to all their other transgressions; and thus did his Majesty's ministers reduce Ireland to the state of a miserable Province, whose ministers had stopped totally and absolutely the utterance of the people—in Parliament by corruption; in the nation by a Convention bill, and in the counties by the army.

Their plans had however, hitherto failed—their gunpowder bill had failed—their insurrection bill had failed—their suspension of the habeas corpus had failed—the then Parliament stood on the ruins of all the rudiments of its own constitution; and the foundations of its own authority, and presented the horrid image of a Legislative Body standing on the ruins of the law—a constitutional body standing on the ruins of the constitution, and a political body standing on the ruins of every principle, political or moral. All this we submit did not succeed—the lives and fortunes so liberally pledged to the insanities of government, they did not succeed—his Majesty's minister's then laid aside all law, or affectation of law; and resorted to a military government,

vernment, accordingly they warrant their General to issue an order to his troops to disarm the people, and to act without the interposition of the civil power. We have been told that the army has been merciful; but we submit to his Majesty what must be the condition of his Irish subjects, if they are to rest their lives and properties not on the protection of the law, but the mercy of the troops. We have seen returns of the different offences committed by his Majesty's soldiers on the people of Ireland—they class under the heads of murder, rape, torture, imprisonment, and house-burning; we repeat it, torture has been applied—the people have been hung up by his Majesty's soldiers to force confessions—they have practised on the Irish, what would disgrace the savage. We repeat it, his Majesty's Irish subjects have been put to the torture, and we add—the Irish may be tortured, but they will not be enslaved. But we leave that subject to a collection which we understand is to make its appearance, and to be transmitted to his Majesty, observing only that in order to judge of the cruelties committed on the lower orders—we should suppose the same committed on those in the higher rank of life. Let us suppose a Lord Lieutenant picketted, Lords of the Council put to the torture, members of the two Houses sent to the fleet, their children hung up to extort confession, and a bill of indemnity passed for the perpetrators of this. What would be his Majesty's feelings on such an occasion? Exactly such as are now the feelings of his Irish subjects. We lament the murder of certain unfortunate persons of the higher rank—we find no bill of indemnity in their case—and if we and those of their order sympathize so much in their catastrophe, how generally must the common people sympathize with one another?—The compassion of the rich if extended to the poor and the people, is humanity; but if those who lament the sufferings of the one, will not see the other—if they will support a minister committing the other—if they cry  
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out when an attack is made on a palace, and connive at the burning of a village—if they are inflamed when one of their own rank is assassinated, but are satisfied when the peasantry are collectively murdered—We appeal to his Majesty's own feelings, what in such a case is the humanity of his ministers, and their abettors? Here we perceive and lament the effects of inveteracy, conceived by his Majesty's minister's against the Irish.—“ Irritable and “ quellable, devoted to superstition, deaf to law, and hostile to property ;” such was the picture, which at different times his ministers in Ireland have painted of his people with a latent view to flatter the English, by the degradation of the Irish, and by such sycophantship and malice, they have persuaded themselves to consider their fellow-subjects as a different species of human creature, fair objects of religious proscription and political incapacities, but not of moral relationship, or moral obligation; accordingly they have afforded indemnity for the rich and new pains and penalties for the people; they have given felonious descriptions of his Majesty's subjects, and have easily persuaded themselves to exercise felonious practices against their lives and properties; they have become as barbarous as their system, and as savage as their own description of their countrymen and their equals; and now it seems they have communicated to the British minister, at once their deleterious maxims and their foul expressions, and he too indulges and wantons in villainous discourses against the people of Ireland, sounding the horrid trumpet of carnage and separation. Thus the language of the ministers, becomes an encouragement to the army to murder the Irish.

We leave these scenes, they are dreadful; a ministry in league with the abettors of the Orange-boys and at war with the people, a people unable to procure a hearing in either country, while the loquacity of their enemies besieges the throne.

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We leave the history of the minister and proceed to that of the people; we shall confine ourselves to three bright passages, and when we set forth their achievements we must set forth their difficulties. We begin with the free trade—here they had to contend against the government, and the Parliament of both kingdoms; they saw the expensive courses of domestic government, coupled with commercial restrictions, with the war and the embargo, reduce in or about the year 1778 the state to bankruptcy, and the people to beggary. The British government saw the same thing, and in our approaching ruin, learning the effects of its own policy, conceived with infinite caution the idea of commercial relaxation; five bills were about that time brought into the British Parliament with much parade of bounty and concession. Three of them were too insignificant to be remembered—two of those bills were less unworthy of notice, one purported to permit an export from Ireland to the British Plantations, or the settlements on the coast of Africa, of all our manufactures except woollen; the other the import of all their produce, tobacco excepted. The import bill not excepting sugar, was thought too extensive, and the export with a new exception in the instance of cotton was passed, and those five wretched bills cut down to one wretched bill, rendered more wretched by a new exception, and which never would have been known in Ireland, but for the reluctance with which it was passed in England; was displayed to this country as food for the hungry, and raiment for the naked. It will be asked what part did the Parliament of Ireland take on this occasion? it rejected an address declaring this measure inadequate, and substituted an apology for an address, in a declaration expressive of thanks for favours already granted, and an indolent hope that such favours would be extended.

The British minister finding that our thanks and our ruin were perfectly compatible, sent dispatches to this country,

try, for information more authentic than that of her Parliament. The commissioners of the revenue answer—and so heart-broken was the country at that moment, that the commissioners stating the cause, extent, and remedy of public distress—do not venture to touch on the sound of free trade. They don't even venture to name a woollen trade—they mention the impediment interposed by the American war to emigration from Ireland, as one cause of her distress; they state the bill which we have just mentioned, and disposed of, as a great means of commerce and object of gratitude; and add, that an import trade, from the plantations and America would be adequate. How then did the country get a free trade? by the exertions of the people—who opposed the motion for free trade? The minister—who proposed to bury that question in the grave of a committee? The minister—who opposed the motion to refuse new taxes, until the restoration of free trade? The minister—who opposed the six months money-bill? The minister—we appeal to his Majesty whom are we to thank for free trade—his people or his minister. Frightened into concession by the menaces of Ireland; frightened out of them by the menaces of England, he was frightened back again. This is the account which the late Mr. Burke gave of the motives of the minister in that his transaction with Ireland. But even in this period—this period of popular virtue—this period of popular panic—this period of their consternation; for it was not concession; the minister had the precaution to preserve the Parliamentary supremacy of Great Britain—he but half repealed the glass act, he chose a word of curious and select operation, the word expediency in the repeal of the woollen act, he kept the mutiny act, he kept the navy act, he kept a multitude of silent trade-laws; and he retained also an operative post office, he preserved the splinter of the despotism, and gave the country every thing in trade, except his power of taking it all back again.

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We come now to the second period of Irish achievement; here the people had still greater difficulties to contend against; scarce had the acts of free trade been passed, when the minister took precautions against a free constitution. In an address from the Lords he stigmatized as misguided men, those who contended for the independence of the Irish Parliament; he accompanied that address, by resolutions in the Commons, couched in terms of gratitude for trade restored, but intended to dissolve the spirit of the time, and to operate against constitution demanded; resolutions attended with a dissolute joy and fictitious thanksgiving, wherein men make peace with the government for the crime of past services to the country, by undertaking to check her future progress, and blasting her growth. Agreeable to their determination of opposition to the independency of the Irish Parliament, the then representative of administration canvassed the Irish House of Commons in the following memorable expressions:—"Sir, we hope you are against all constitutional questions;" agreeable to this determination two letters were sent from the Earl of Hillsborough then one of the Secretary's of State to the government of this country, one directing it to oppose all latent claims of the Irish nation; meaning by latent claims, the independency of the Irish parliament—the other directing it to oppose the introduction of an Irish mutiny-bill on the principle, meaning by the principle, "the Legislative competency of the British parliament to make law for this kingdom." Agreeable to this determination, the declaration of right was rejected; it was rejected as a measure of separation, that is to say, as the Catholic bill was afterwards resisted, as an Irish mutiny-bill was resisted, as the reform of parliament was resisted, and as conciliation is now resisted; agreeable to this determination, the propounded modification of Poyning's law was rejected, and a perpetual mutiny-bill was passed, with a clause of reference, whereby the parliament of England was in substance, enabled to make  
articles

articles of war for Ireland in all time to come. Twice in the ensuing session was the claim of right, and twice was the modification of Poyning's law rejected; and twice was the sense of Parliament taken in favour of a perpetual mutiny-bill, by majorities in all these instances, so immense in number, as to overpower their own privileges; but so slight in character, and so criminal in conduct, that the Irish secretary, on the removal of his party, precipitated to England to propose, and did propose, crudely indeed, and without authority, that very claim of right, which he himself, with that majority, had a few weeks before repeatedly rejected, and had in the speeches of his courtiers, and the pamphlets of his dependents, traduced and stigmatized. How then did Ireland obtain her claim of right? we submit to his Majesty; she obtained it by the exertions of his people, by the fall of his ministry, and the defeat of their projects; these were the events which carried the claims of Ireland so triumphantly, that the very persons, among whom were some of his present Irish ministers, who had voted against, then voted for that claim, and the measures connected with it, and added, in an unanimous address, that they tendered that claim as they did their lives, declaring also, that their own rejection of that measure, and the measures connected with it, was a principal cause of discontent and jealousy. Who then are we to thank principally for this measure? his Majesty's people, or his Majesty's ministers; we do, however, acknowledge a very considerable degree of merit in the new and momentary English minister of that period, assisting and meeting cordially and frankly, the wishes of the people of Ireland, observing that there never was any English minister so much slandered by the court of Dublin.

These exertions have been, by one of his Majesty's Irish ministers, called clamour; we appeal to his Majesty's candour, and ask, whether the struggle to recover the independency of the Irish parliament, against the power of England,

land, and under the frown of the government of the two countries was clamour, was the struggle to restore the judicature of the Lords, without their stir clamour; was the struggle to limit the perpetual mutiny-bill, and make the army dependent on the parliament clamour; was the struggle to abolish the legislative usurpations of the council clamour; was the struggle to obtain a free trade clamour; if so, then was the petition of right clamour; the revolution clamour; and the act which placed his Majesty's family on the throne clamour.

The volunteers are no more, but their memory lives to answer their defamer; his Majesty's ministers in Ireland, may praise the constitution, but it was the volunteers who raised those pillars, on which that praise must be recorded. There was heat, there was excess, there was inconstancy, which by moments affected that immense and that sanguine battalion; so in the great works of nature, and in the rivers that bring fertility along with them, we find irregularity and deluge; shall we therefore, pronounce the Shannon a nuisance? they did, we allow, sometimes overflow, they mixed mud in the abundance of their waters, but it was on that tide that Ireland sailed so gallantly into harbour, with her free trade and free constitution; averse to that glorious spectacle, stood the angry and jealous spirit of our ministers, chronicling the acts, and noting the errors of those very volunteers, which at that very moment, that very ministry, in both Houses of parliament, thanked for their deserts; deserts which we are not to estimate by the existing difficulties of the day, but the difficulties, depression, and degradation of ages, through which they had to elaborate; if we consider that the people who had thus associated for the defence of the realm, and added the cause of trade and liberty, without which, that realm did not deserve to be defended, had been in a great measure excluded from  
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the intercourse of the rest of the world ; that they had for one hundred years been ground to the earth by commercial, political, and religious tyranny ; that their domestic ministers, had been the provincial slaves of another country, licensed to exercise certain predatory plundering privileges over their own ; that the little learning which was not prohibited, was rocked in the cradle of prejudice ; we say, if we consider that this people so exiled, so impoverished, so plundered, so persecuted, so enslaved, so disfranchised, did at last, spontaneously associate, unite, arm, array, defend, illustrate and free their country, overawe bigotry, silence riot, and produce, out of their own head, armed cap-a-pee, like wisdom issuing from the head of the thunderer, commerce and constitution ; what shall we say of such a people ? what shall we say of the oppressors of such a people ? Have those oppressors forgotten the generous offer of those Volunteers, on the expected invasion, and the probable effect of that offer, when government had left us no army, and when we had no defence, save only those Volunteers ? Have those oppressors compared our present insecurity, with a charge of between three and four millions, and our then security, without any additional charge whatsoever ? If they have, let them declare who have defended his Majesty's crown and dignity against a foreign enemy—the men who freed the nation, or the ministry who enslaved her—the Volunteers or the tyrant ? let the Lords and Commons, with decorum we speak it, go to their church ; they have returned thanks to the Admirals for their victories, let them return thanks to the people for their being, or rather let them return thanks to their God for their political existence recovered by that people ; let the youth of the country go to the grave of the Volunteers—it is at the tomb of departed patriotism, where youth is to be trained to virtue ; let them frequent that grave, there the garland will be ever green, and the  
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warm heart, and the tears of the nation will be there; and from a due contemplation over the great inhabitant of that tomb; let them collect a conscious elevation of soul, and a prouder sense of existence; here his Majesty himself withdrawing his ear from the poisonous suggestions of his ministers, may reflect with pride on the faithful Irishman, who when encouraged and trusted is capable of every thing which is great, of every thing which is free, of every thing which is loyal. "Oh! thou that humblest the proud, and cloathest the naked, look down on this man in the day of his travail, so govern his spirit, and soften his rulers, that thy will may be fulfilled, and thy people may be free."

We come now to the next measure, that deserves the name of achievement; it is the grant of the Catholic Franchise—what difficulties had not the Catholics to encounter? They were reviled in every court publication; the Presbyterians were reviled for supporting them, a new word of Presbyter Catholic was invented to comprehend the vituperation of both; the court endeavoured to divide them from one another, they tampered with their Nobility, they tampered with their Clergy, the publication of their ministers, charged on the United Irishman, that crime of which the Court was guilty, "detaching the Catholic aristocracy from the Catholic people," it was the ministry who detached the chiefs from the people, and not the United Irishmen, who detached the people from their chiefs; that ministry assailed them every where in parliament—and out of it by a tempest of abuse on their religion, profession, character, and appellation; they declared that the communication of the elective franchise would be the overthrow of the Protestant religion, and the British connection—and pursuant to that allegation they not only opposed the Catholic petition, but rejected it; and added the rejection of the petition of the Presbyter-

rians in their favour, teaching the two sects by a common insult to acknowledge a common interest. The petitioners whom they had thus banished from the bar of the House of Commons, the minister pursued into the country, and in some cases sent, and in all encouraged resolutions to be entered into by grand juries, declaring their determination never to admit the Catholics to a participation of the elective franchise in any time to come; that is, they denounced the hopes and liberties of their Catholic brethren without reserve, saving, contingency or condition as a great fundamental principle of their political existence; and an eternal attribute of their faith, political, moral and religious; they persecuted those your Majesty's subjects and persecuted, until they persecuted them into a Convention; and they persecuted the deputies of that Convention into Great Britain, and letters were there dispatched by persons connected with that court, and given into the hands of some of the royal family, to be laid before his Majesty; containing an account of certain murders committed in Ireland, to convey an insinuation of a Catholic plot, to murder his Majesty's Protestant subjects. About this time certain great events took place on the continent, and his Majesty's English cabinet influenced by those events, and by his Majesty's royal disposition, recommended to the Irish ministry and parliament the case of their Catholic fellow-subjects, and then that very ministry and its abettors, who had reviled their claim, had abused their persons, had insulted their petition, had declared that the communication of that elective franchise would overset the Protestant church; would overturn the Protestant government — would destroy the British connection, voted against that Protestant religion, as by this declaration it should seem; against that Protestant government; against that British connection, pursuant to the commands of the British cabinet, and then did the British cabinet continue that Irish ministry to



to govern the country and insult the people. Here we beg leave to ask his Majesty, who are his people to thank for this restoration of privilege.

We have submitted to his Majesty for some years back, the conduct of his ministers and of his people; we now come to answer the charges of the former against the latter, they amount principally to two charges: 1st, that the people are the aggressor; the 2d, that the experiment of conciliation, has been fully and repeatedly tried. Most absolutely do we deny both, on the contrary, we affirm not only that the aggression was on the part of the minister, but that the policy, of the ministers towards this country, has been little less than a course of aggression interrupted by the fears of the British cabinet imposing its commands on the desperate meanness of the cabinet of Ireland; and then relapsing into violence, as it recovered from apprehension.

We pass over in the history of aggression, the long and mighty account of 100 years, and the extinction of our existence, political and commercial for that period, observing that this period, by one of our minister's has been described as auspicious, and observing further, that all the bounty of his Majesty's ministers to this country, after so long a suffering, might be a reparation to her feelings, but not a compensation to her interest; which reflection should, wherever his Majesty's ministers speak of Ireland, impose on them the duty of modesty and reserve. We pass over that aggression, and state the offence committed at an early period of the reign, namely 1768, the destruction of the liberty of the subject, by the purchase of its parliament, an enormity admitted by one of his Majesty's ministers in the House of Commons; and stated to have cost the nation half a million. We state another act of aggression

to have been committed in the proclamation for imposing an embargo, without the consent of Parliament; another the enactment of a tea tax, imposed on Ireland by the British parliament, and transmitted to the commissioners to be collected. We submit that in all these different proceedings, the acts of aggression together with the criminal wish, and aggressive principle in the heart of his Majesty's minister towards Ireland, when uncontroled by foreign events; are fully established and demonstrated. But it will be said, that all this was done away by the acquisitions of 1782; we wish it had been so, but will posterity believe that seven years after that acquisition, a minister of the crown speaking in Parliament, did declare that a practice of buying the parliament of Ireland for half a million, had been formerly resorted to, and must if opposition persisted, again be practised; the subject was not, as has been pretended, the new places, but a charge on the opposition; who were told that a similar opposition had caused such an expence, and that the then opposition, would cause a much greater one; 'tis in vain to equivocate the words were uttered, the minister may have forgotten, but the people remember them; and several of us were witnesses to them, nor was it merely the minister's expression, it was his sentiment—it was his measure. The threat was put into the fullest execution; the canvass of that ministry was every where, in the House; in the lobby, in the street, at the door of the parliamentary undertakers, rapped at, and worn by the little caitiff's of government, who offered amnesty to some, honours to others, and corruption to all, and where the word of the Viceroy was doubted, they offered their own; accordingly we find a number of parliamentary provisions were created, and divers peerages sold with such effect that the same parliament who had voted the chief governor a criminal, did immediately after give  
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that very governor implicit support, and the subsequent parliament, did under the same influence on the Catholic question—on the pension question—on the place question; vote and unvote, and turn and change according to the orders of government—with a versatility that made an indignant public—cry, shame upon them. This policy was an attack on the moral, as well as the constitutional system—and guaranteed political slavery, by moral prostitution—proposing that the gentlemen of parliament—should be systematically robbers, in order that the people should be systematically slaves. It was a condition on which no freedom—no government—no religion—no connection—no throne could long exist. It was the renunciation of the repeal of the 6th of Geo. 1st—and a repeal of the act of renunciation transferring the legislative function of the Irish parliament, in full power and dominion to the British cabinet. All the Clubs, Whig Club; United Irishmen &c. grew out of that measure; all the public discontents which have been the theme of government, grew out of that measure and its consequences; could it be otherwise; could that people who had refused to obey the authority of the English parliament, allow the legislative usurpation of its cabinet. What now becomes of that interrogatory, which demands why the people were not, pursuant to the declaration, satisfied with repeal—and renunciation. What, satisfied with being cheated? With being handed over from a British parliament, to a British cabinet; we ask could that people, who had refused to obey the legislative authority of the parliament of England—obey the legislative usurpation of her cabinet; founded on the purchase of the Irish parliament, and the sale of the Irish nation; could that people who had armed for their country, her defence, and her freedom; who had recovered her trade, restored her independency, established a great (and it shall not be our fault if it be not

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an immortal name;) cancel that renown; renounce that liberty, endanger that commerce, surrender that independency, and consent to be canted like stock, as slaves to be transferred to the legislative yoke of the cabinet of another country, in covein with the subaltern tyranny of the cabinet of their own, in the hands of a ministry who had opposed the claims of the country, mourned over her acquisitions, bartered away her independency; blemished her character, and insulted her spirit; could they who are charged with the crime of a refusal of amnesty from the Marquis of Buckingham, give that nobleman amnesty for a conduct, which they themselves had just condemned, and which he by subsequent malefactions had greatly aggravated; could they who are charged by the publication of the minister, with a declaration pledging themselves to satisfaction, as far as regarded England in the establishment of legislative, and judicial independency, entertain satisfaction in the loss of that independency, and support the instruments of provincial government, who had purloined that independency; could they forget who they were, and who that ministry was, and derogate from themselves, so far as to sink into its little comrade in its dirty doings, the purchase of the parliament the transfer of the legislature, the sale of the peerage, and the persecution of the Catholics. In what country do we write this? To what ear do we address ourselves? In the presence of a people claiming to be free, and before their sovereign, whose greatest glory is to be appointed the king of a free people, do we interpose once more our solemn protest against the proceedings and sentiments above related, as polluted, desperate, shameless, and incorrigible—if ever there shall be in this country, a rebellion; these proceedings and the measures adopted in support of those proceedings will be the cause of it; if ever there shall be a separation of Ireland from Great Britain, these proceedings and the measures.



asures adopted to support those proceedings will be the cause of it; if the administration of this country became afterwards a government of coercion; and after a government of blood; those proceedings were the cause—against them, against the strain of sentiments which suggested them; against the melancholy strain of calamities, which followed from them; and against the bloody train of consequences which threaten; we beg once more to enter our most solemn protest.

Before we close the scene, we call on his Majesty's ministers in both countries. We have stated not mischiefs but violations, not evil measures, but deadly productive principles of evil; we ask them, in the presence of both nations, in the presence of their king, to whom we appeal against them; we ask whether the monstrous bribery of the Irish parliament in 1789, to break down national party, and Irish influence, and to substitute therein, a British minister's domination; whether embargo on the export of our provision, imposed by proclamation, without the consent of parliament, and continued for years, with a view to serve certain British contractors, in the American war; whether these acts were a subversion of the fundamental rights and liberties of the subject? whether a tea tax, imposed by the British parliament on the people of Ireland in 1779, was an attempt to subvert the fundamental rights and liberties of the subject. Whether a perpetual mutiny bill, forming an army, independent of parliament, was a subversion of the fundamental rights and liberties of the subject? whether a tribute, contained in the propositions, was an attempt to subvert the fundamental rights and liberties of the subject? whether the purchase of parliament, as was admitted in 1789, was the subversion of the fundamental rights and liberties of the subject? whether

whether the transfer of legislature, the consequence of that purchase to the British cabinet, was the subversion of the fundamental rights and liberties of the subject? was the sale of the peerage, for the purchase of the Commons. a subversion of the fundamental rights and liberties of the subject? Let his Majesty's ministers look to their dates, and say whether any conspiracy in any description of men, be charged, even by themselves, to have existed, before they committed against the people of our country, these deadly and recorded atrocities; we ask again, was the transportation of the country people aboard a tender, without judge, or jury, or process, a subversion of the fundamental rights and liberties of the subject? we ask did the military organization of the country, of which they have complained, exist before that time? We, therefore, in common with our fellow subjects, who are not now permitted to meet, arraign those ministers—let them come forth. That calamitous and ill-starred minister, who has lately inveighed against the Irish, and who now endeavours to sharpen the minds of his countrymen, for an Irish, as his predecessors did for an American war; the other inflammatory minister, who seems to have transmitted from this country, his passions and maxims; we arraign them in the presence of his Majesty, and we affirm that they subverted the fundamental rights and constitution of the land, before their charge supposes any description of the people to have conspired against the government.

We have answered the charge of aggression;—we come to that of conciliation: the first experiment of conciliation was in 1782. We beg to consider the nature of that experiment, it was an experiment to accomplish impossibilities,  
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to reconcile the antient government of jobbers and dependents, with the new spirit of the people, who had recovered their constitution, by obtaining a victory over that government; it was an attempt to unite the hoary decrepitude of the old jobbing ministry, and the borough parliament, with the dignity, the expectations, the exigencies, and the feelings of what was emphatical young Ireland.

The business of the repeal and renunciation was settled, one of the objects of the claim of right had been, to oblige the parliament of England to withdraw its claim of legislature, and the people had at first conceived the repeal of the act, containing that claim, to be sufficient, they afterward changed their mind, no matter; they changed their mind without legal ground and against the best legal authorities, but under considerable authorities notwithstanding; they had the authority of an unexperienced and consummate senator, they had the authority of a corps, styling itself a corps of lawyers (they have since been less sanguine) enrolling the names of several respectable barristers, and using the name of the bar to influence the people. They had the secret fomentation of some of the old court, who discountenanced for that moment, for their past opposition to regular liberty had retired to its excesses; have the abettors of this doubt been rewarded? have some of them been made Marquisses, and some of them Judges, and shall we denounce the people? The dispute being, however, settled, and the momentary administration of Lord Northington, (every patriot administration in Ireland has been momentary) that administration under which several beneficial regulations and laws, constitutional and commercial, had passed, being removed, and the old court returning in plenitude of power, to meet an Irish parliament in plenitude of independency; it remained for that  
parliament

parliament to act, and that parliament would do nothing. The people saw the English manufacturers in possession of our market, a possession obtained by unjust and despotic regulations, and not the result of fair rivalry; they knew that their parliament, till that æra, wanted the power to recover these markets; they saw the Irish gentleman cloathed, as he had been governed, by the British manufacturer, they knew as well as their minister, that the wool of the country might not at all times equal her consumption, but then they knew better, it seems, than that minister, that it was more expedient to work Spanish wool in Ireland, than to export Irish wool, if wanted, and buy English cloth in Great Britain; they therefore called on their parliament to protect their trade, but this call, their parliament thought proper to refuse, and decided against the establishment of their own manufactures in their own markets; they decided also against the re-export of foreign produce.

The act of navigation had not in form passed in Ireland, there were doubts whether it had passed at all, so great, that considerable persons in England became desirous that it should pass in this country verbatim; the construction which England had given, or the alteration which she had annexed to that act, had amounted to the exclusion of a re-export from Ireland to Great Britain, while she enforced a re-export from Great Britain into Ireland; here was an opportunity of rectifying this misconstruction and inequality; how did the parliament use this opportunity? by suffering the continuance of this misconstruction and inequality, by rejecting two proposed clauses of reciprocity, and by passing the act of navigation for England, without a stipulation of justice or equality for Ireland. It afterwards bought that equality, by the sale of the rights of Ireland to trade to the East. How did that parliament act with  
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respect to the extravagancies of government, old and new? it allowed them all, it rejected a motion to diminish the expence of collecting the revenue; it provided for all the extravagant charges that were at that time preferred, it had given in new taxes, £.140,000 per annum, in stipulation of trade and œconomy; instead of trade and œconomy it got a new debt, and a new pension list, and was satisfied. It passed a riot act, it passed a police bill, and it rejected a bill of reform, it did this under the dominion of the English and Irish minister, and was a legislature professedly national, substantially provincial. The question of Reform had been more interesting from the failure of other questions, the people had settled their dispute with the British parliament, it remained to come to a settlement with their own. Their parliament was returned by the individual, not the community, and the individual sold his compliance to the court of London; the people thought it just and right, as they had by their own exertions, shaken off the domination of an English parliament, to call for an Irish one; they were quickened in that pursuit, by the example of the present minister of England, but we are sorry to add, that his offences against Ireland were a greater incentive than his example. We submit to his Majesty, how parliament acted on that question, they rejected the Reform bill, under the influence of his minister, as they had under the same influence, rejected almost every other popular measure.

We come now to lay before his Majesty, the close of this first experiment of reconciliation. That parliament, on the indisposition of his Majesty, attempted to exercise a will of its own, and the consequence was as has been stated already, and acknowledged by the servants of government, his Majesty's ministers immediately bought the parliament, and made that influence which had  
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been before but too predominant, then absolute and irresistible, so that no coalition of aristocratic and popular connection, should affect a minister in Ireland, or resist the orders of the British cabinet, thus possessed of the power of the Irish parliament transferred to Great Britain; we submit to his Majesty what was then this experiment of conciliation. It was the independency of the Irish parliament in 1782, and the purchase of that independence in 1789, attended in the interim, for the most part, by a suspension of its exercise. Is any minister now so idle, so superficial, so obstinate, so uninformed, and so desperate as to persist to call, in the presence of his Majesty, this transaction an experiment of conciliation, an experiment immediately after which the people perceived the same images of pollution in the ministry, and a vast increase of rank majority in the senate, and beheld in the person of the Lord Lieutenant's secretary, the same dictator, the representative of the English merchant and the British cabinet, placed in the seat of his predecessors, with more authority, lording it over the Irish parliament, busy to fuggle corruption and famish freedom, and active to receive from men, calling themselves the representatives of the Irish, horrid incense, affording a spectacle so vile and abject, that the people turned their faces away as from an abomination.

We come now to another experiment, the Catholic concession. There was a circumstance attending the outset of that experiment, extremely awkward, it could not be made without obliging the Irish parliament and ministry, to contradict their most solemn declaration, to do away their most decided acts, and to renounce that execrable creed of some months before, professed with the solemnity of a religious contract, and uttered in a roar of frenzy, of folly, of bigotry, and of a poor unfortunate fanatic intolerance, so that the measure which should reconcile the people to the



the English ministry, must render them, if they were not so before, irreconcilable to the Irish ministry and the Irish parliament, and so sensible were the House of Commons of this, that a few days after its versatili-ty, it voted the necessity of its own reformation; but though the concession, for the purpose of sinking the Irish ministry and parliament, was ample and complete, yet for the service of the English ministry, it was scanty and ill-supported; scarce was the concession recommended from the throne, when the custody of this conciliation was left to the persecuting party, that had forbidden the bonds of concord, between the king and his subjects. Scarce had the Catholic petition been referred to the Lords, when it was charged and scourged, by one of the minister's throwing his quiver of parthian shafts at conciliation. The Catholics had passed through the red sea, had wandered in the desert for 100 years, and when his Majesty was advised to beckon them by his sceptre, to the borders of the promised land, his Irish ministers seized their leaders to hang them; several of them were immediately tried on a charge of felony, and were triumphantly acquitted, as they had been unjustly and ignominiously arraigned; was this conciliation? Scarce had the bill passed, when all the influence of the Castle was exercised to keep the Catholics out of the corporations, and to exclude them by intrigue, from situations to which they were indeed admissible by law. We wish his Majesty would order his servants to lay before him a list of such Catholics as they had suffered to enjoy situations, under the new act of relaxation. Scarce had the bill been committed, when it was declared in a speech supposed to be uttered and published by one of the ministers, that "the Catholics could never be cordially affected to his Majesty, that they were as barbarous as ever, that the mass were only res-  
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“cued from brutality by bigotry, and that if they did  
 “not wish to subvert the Protestant religion, they must  
 “resist the ruling passions of the human heart.” What  
 had been said, if after the revolution of 1688, the ministers of James II. had been the counsellors of King William? exactly what was said in Ireland, when the ministers of a system of proscription, were made the guardians of a system of liberality, and the scolds of the people, the ministers of conciliation; when on a plan of reconciling the Irish by parliamentary constitution and Catholic emancipation, those ministers were retained who had given to one expressly a cordial disapprobation, and had called the other an act of insanity.

Here then is the second experiment; an experiment on the affection of a numerous community, commencing in inequality, accompanied with vituperation resisted in execution, and committed to the care of its most inveterate enemies.

But in order to lay before his Majesty the grounds whereby to make a full and fair estimate of the merits of the second experiment; we will consider the third—the appointment of Earl Fitzwilliam to the government of Ireland. Here is an experiment of conciliation, where a Lord Lieutenant was sent to this country—with professed powers of concession, was permitted to get an immense supply on the credit of those powers; and then was recalled before the concession was made, on the professed charge, of having resorted to the experiment of conciliation; we are to add, that his Majesty’s subjects having very generally petitioned on the subject of this fraud, and insult; were answered by troops. Here then are three experiments made by his Majesty’s ministers on the affections of his Irish subjects; the first where the thing conceded

ceded was substantially withdrawn. The second, where the enemies of the conciliation were continued in the ministry; and the third where the viceroy was recalled for making the experiment.

“ You got a repeal, and you were not satisfied; a renunciation, and you were not satisfied; a place bill, and you were not satisfied; a pension bill, and you were not satisfied; a responsibility bill, and you were not satisfied;” we answer, yes; but what was the object of the people on the repeal; what in the renunciation; what in the place; what in the pension bill? An Irish independent parliament with a commons chosen by the people; did they get such a House of parliament? Let the minister answer that question.

These measures were concessions to clamour, says the minister, and it is because they were felt by the minister, as concessions to what the call clamour, that they were in execution inadequate, in effect unsatisfactory, and in process of time were evaded and eluded.

“ You got a place-bill,” say the minister, no! such bills of different extents and different modifications, had been repeatedly introduced, and repeatedly rejected; and then in the panic of 1793 instead of a place-bill, a bill calling itself by that name, but in fact an elusion of a place-bill was proposed by the minister, renounced by the opposition, and passed by the parliament; a bill which disqualified but a few offices—put down more, and was accompanied or followed, by a vast encrease of influence, mediate or immediate. You got a pension-bill, says the minister, yes; but a pension-bill without its object—what was the object of a place and pension-bill to the opposition for they were never primary objects nor loudly called for the people—the internal reform of parliament,

parliament, and what was the effect of the minister's place and pension bill? an evasion of that reform and the retention and the encrease of undue influence. Shall we observe on the treasury responsibility bill, enough to say it had been delayed for above a year after it had been promised and was finally secured by Lord Fitzwilliams administration by certain regulations then passed, and under all the circumstances of influence above-mentioned amounted to responsibility in his Majesty's ministers to themselves.

One of his Majesty's Ministers has arraigned the people for stirring commercial questions, after having through their parliament engaged, that on the admission of their claims of right, as far as concerns the two nations constitutional questions should cease; we will not suffer the enemy of the claim of right to become commentators, and we cannot but marvel at a remark which supposes the word constitutional, to be another word; namely commercial, and to mean that a satisfaction in commercial inequality, and injustice, should be the result of the establishment of constitutional equality and independence; in the same strain of inanity, it is charged that an application for the redress of domestic abuses; was a departure from the pledge of satisfaction, in the address of 1782. That pledge speaks of constitutional questions between the two nations; which the remarker supposes to mean all commercial questions with England; and all kind of questions with our own government, of any nature whatever; it would seem by this that the people contended for a free constitution, to place the opponents of that constitution, at the head of the government; we beg to observe that that claim which demanded to be legislated by no power, save only the King, the Lords, and Commons of Ireland, did expressly go against a stipulation of satisfaction in a borough representation, to the exclusion of the Commons, and did impliedly go against an acquiescence

quiescence in the appointment of the present administration; a ministry who had first opposed the rights of their own parliament; afterwards by millions, or half-millions, had rendered those rights inefficacious. With as little reason has the Catholic been reproached, and told that in point of right, he was equal to the Protestant; because he could sit in either Houses of parliament, if he swore he was not a Catholic. This inequality which one of the ministers denied; he justifies by an assertion, (a common figure of speech with those ministers) that the support of his Majesty's throne was (we should say his people) his minister, says the altar; the abhorrence of the Virgin Mary, and the abjuration of the real presence; that the Irish legislature however competent to disfranchise; is incompetent to qualify the Catholic to sit in parliament. We have done with the history of his Majesty's ministers, and their argument; it is a history of crime, and a refutation of folly.

We have done with the account which his Majesty's ministers have given of the people; we close with the account which they have given of themselves, not in words but in substance: They came forward in 1789, and affirmed that the parliament of Ireland, had exercised a power of independent legislature, which tended to separation; and they desire for the management of that parliament, the sale of the peerage, and the use of the treasury; in 93 the same ministry came forward again, and gave an account of the effect of this operation; and affirm on the authority, as they say, of a report of a committee of the House of Lords, that the people were so exasperated as to have determined to reform that parliament by force of arms. They accordingly demand extraordinary powers for the coercion of the people, as they had before demanded extraordinary sums of money, for the government of the parliament;



liament; they came forth again, to report the effect of their second operation, they affirm on the authority, they say, of a report of committees of both Houses, that matters had become infinitely worse, for that the people of the north had actually enrolled, to the number of above 90,000 for purposes hostile to the government; they therefore desire more powers, and as law had hitherto proved insufficient for their purposes, they desire to be permitted to act without it, and to let the army loose upon the people; in the course of a year the same ministry came forward again, and give an account of their third experiment: They state, that they had lost the affections of the South as well as of the North; that the province which on the former year had displayed its loyalty, had changed its sentiments; that a great part of Leinster, as well as of Munster, in addition to Ulster, had now become organized; and that the French Directory had manifested a disposition to interfere, for the separation of this island from the Crown, and from Great Britain. Here is their system, and its consequences, as substantially stated by themselves.

We conclude our humble representation by preferring our warmest wish for peace, good order and tranquility on all sides; but we think that the surest method of establishing the peace of the country is to restrain the violence of the administration, and with all attachment to his Majesty's person and family, we are bold to say that if time be given for the experiment of conciliation, and if that experiment be tried soon, and fairly, and honestly, if the removal of the integral parts of the administration who never possessed the confidence of our country are now its bitterest scourge: if an emancipation of the Catholics on the footing of perfect political equality seconded by the honest wishes of government with an internal reform of parliament:



parliament : if a full fair and adequate representation of the Commons House, the parent measure of every other good. If such remedies be not resorted to, we submit that his Majesty will then have taken measures which in the present crisis, are the best, the wisest, and the soundest, both for strength of the government, and the security of the Crown.

F I N I S.

